

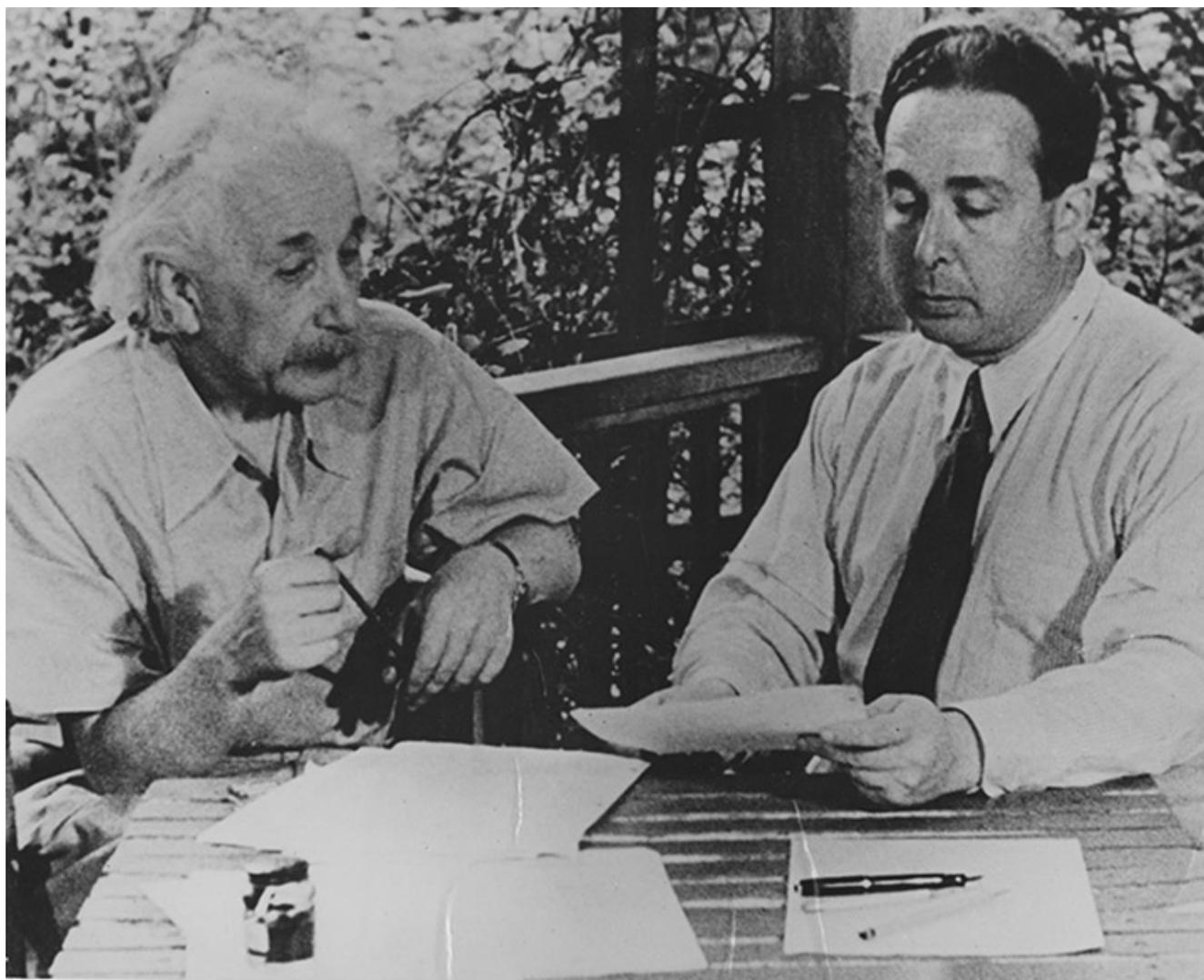
UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

By Dolores Davies Feb 06, 2014

Materials Documenting Birth of Nuclear Age to Be Digitized

Papers include correspondence with Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi, and Edward Teller



Szilard working with Albert Einstein on his letter to President Roosevelt, which resulted in the Manhattan Project.

The papers of physicist and inventor Leo Szilard chronicling the birth of the nuclear age and the work of the Manhattan Project will soon be digitized by the UC San Diego Library.

Szilard played an essential role in the development of the atomic bomb as part of the Manhattan Project, yet he was also a passionate advocate for global arms control and argued for using the bomb as a deterrent—not as a force for destruction. The Library will digitize Szilard’s materials, which extend from 1938 to 1998, thanks to a \$93,000 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).



etic Szilard was known to practically live in hotel rooms.

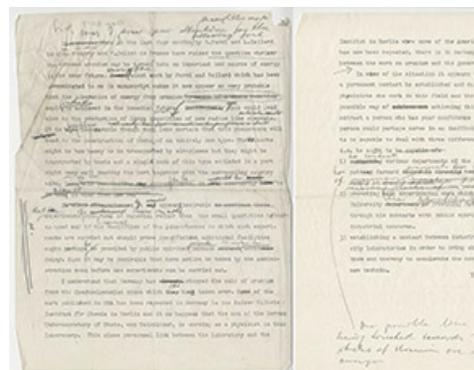
Principal Investigator for the digitization project, which is expected to take approximately two years to complete, is Brian E. C. Schottlaender, the Audrey Geisel University Librarian at UC San Diego. The project will be administered by Lynda Claassen, director of the Library’s Mandeville Special Collections, which houses the Szilard papers.

“We are very pleased to have received this grant from the NHPRC to digitize these historically important and influential materials,” said Schottlaender. “The Szilard papers are fascinating because they reveal the back story of how the atomic bomb was created, and the moral and ethical dilemmas that that powerful creation caused for Szilard and his fellow scientists.”

More than 50,000 items will be digitized through the project, said Schottlaender, including some 550 photographs, as well as several hours of video and audio recordings. The papers include correspondence with numerous fellow scientists with whom Szilard collaborated, including Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi, Jonas Salk, Edward Teller, and Linus Pauling. Also included are a variety of biographical materials, such as immigration papers and passports—Szilard was born in Budapest, emigrating to the U.S. in 1938— and biographical articles and sketches.

In addition to manuscripts, scientific papers, and notebooks, the collection includes drafts, figures, and notes related to the Szilard’s patents, including an early patent in refrigeration held with Albert Einstein and the patent for a “neutronic reactor” developed with Enrico Fermi. Materials related to Szilard’s singular achievements on the “nuclear chain reaction” and “chemostat” are also part of the collection.

“While this collection has been well-used by scholars and researchers, making these materials available digitally will significantly increase their usage,” said Claassen. “It will also



Draft pages of Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt. Click image to view larger version

expand awareness of Szilard's work, and the example he provided of how scientists can operate more fully in society, impacting not only the direction of science, but also the world of politics and humanitarianism.”

The UC San Diego Library houses a substantial collection of materials on 20th century science and science policy, including the papers of some of the nation's most renowned scientists, such as Jonas Salk, Stanley Miller, and Leslie Orgel, as well as Nobel Laureates Harold Urey, Hannes Alfvén, and Maria Goeppert Mayer. The library is also the sole U.S. repository for the papers of world-renowned neuroscientist and Nobel Laureate Francis Crick.

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